



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to the Report by the Personal Representatives on Tolerance

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 9, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins other delegations in welcoming the Personal Representatives on Tolerance back to the Permanent Council and in thanking them for their reports.

Ambassador Orhun, Professor Weisskirchen, Ms. Crickley, the United States appreciates the work you do in raising awareness of tolerance issues and spreading support for OSCE/ODIHR efforts to promote tolerance and non-discrimination. Awareness is important in creating the momentum for building societies where differences are not only tolerated, but also respected. We always look forward to reports in the press of the positive impact your trips and activities have had in participating States.

Media coverage of your activities is also important for delivering this message to all citizens of OSCE countries: Violence and intolerance are unacceptable. It is equally important to inform citizens, through the media, that their States have undertaken commitments to promote respect for diversity, to work together with civil society, and to ensure democracy, equality, and fundamental freedoms. These include the freedoms of association and of religion or belief.

The United States believes that the Personal Representatives are and should be a good link between the OSCE institutions and civil society organizations that fight intolerance at the grassroots level in participating States. With the new year, we look forward to greater efficiency and effectiveness in your work through increased cooperation and coordination of activities. We support the reappointment of the three Personal Representatives on tolerance by the incoming Spanish Chair. We will work closely with the incoming Chairman-in-Office to provide you with the tools needed to accomplish your mission. Where and when necessary, we will support modifications to your operating and reporting requirements to strengthen your effectiveness. We encourage ODIHR to continue to strengthen its cooperation with you, to build on the political openings that you as Personal Representatives can provide.

We support strongly a high-level conference on the Cordoba model to be held in the first half of 2007 in Romania, a decision to this effect should be adopted in Brussels at the Ministerial.

We have read Ambassador Orhun's comprehensive report of his activities since May. We are aware of Ms. Crickley's and Professor Weisskirchen's participation in tolerance related events like the HDIM in Warsaw and the Dubrovnik tolerance implementation meeting. We look

forward to the Berlin experts' meeting on Best Practices in Combating Anti-Semitism which is been organized by Professor Weisskirchen.

The Personal Representatives have a key role to play in supporting the ODIHR Program on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination. In our view, the ODIHR program is doing excellent work in the fields of education, law enforcement training, legislation review, and data collection. With their political access, the Personal Representatives should increase their efforts to build political will in participating States and encourage them to use the assistance that ODIHR can provide. The Representatives can also usefully collect best practices from participating States and share these with other States, with the ODIHR, and with NGOs.

Ms. Crickley, Professor Weisskirchen, and Ambassador Orhun, your work on behalf of the OSCE to raise awareness and spread best practices is a vital component of our common effort to promote tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for diversity. The United States supports the work that you do to maintain a focus on the three specific areas of intolerance; anti-Semitism; intolerance and discrimination against Muslims; and racism, xenophobia, and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions. We wish you success with the activities planned for the rest of this year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.